

POEMS AND SONGS

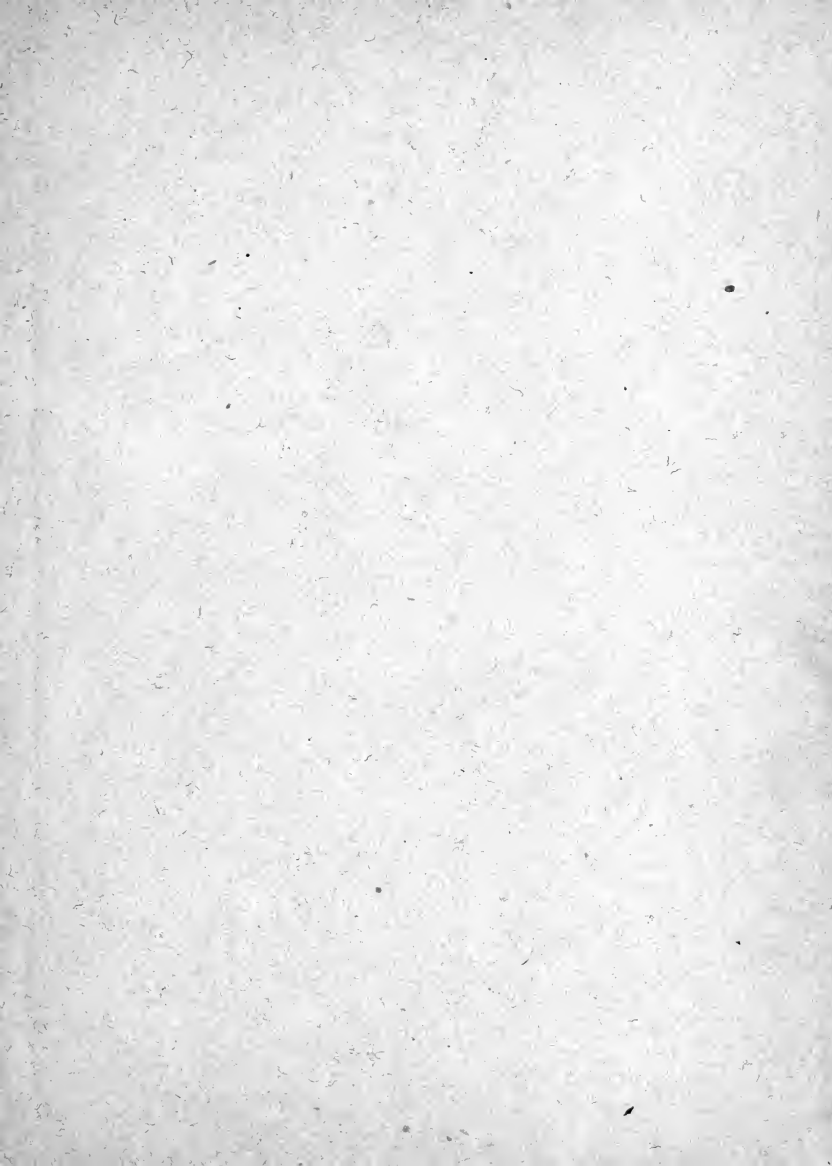
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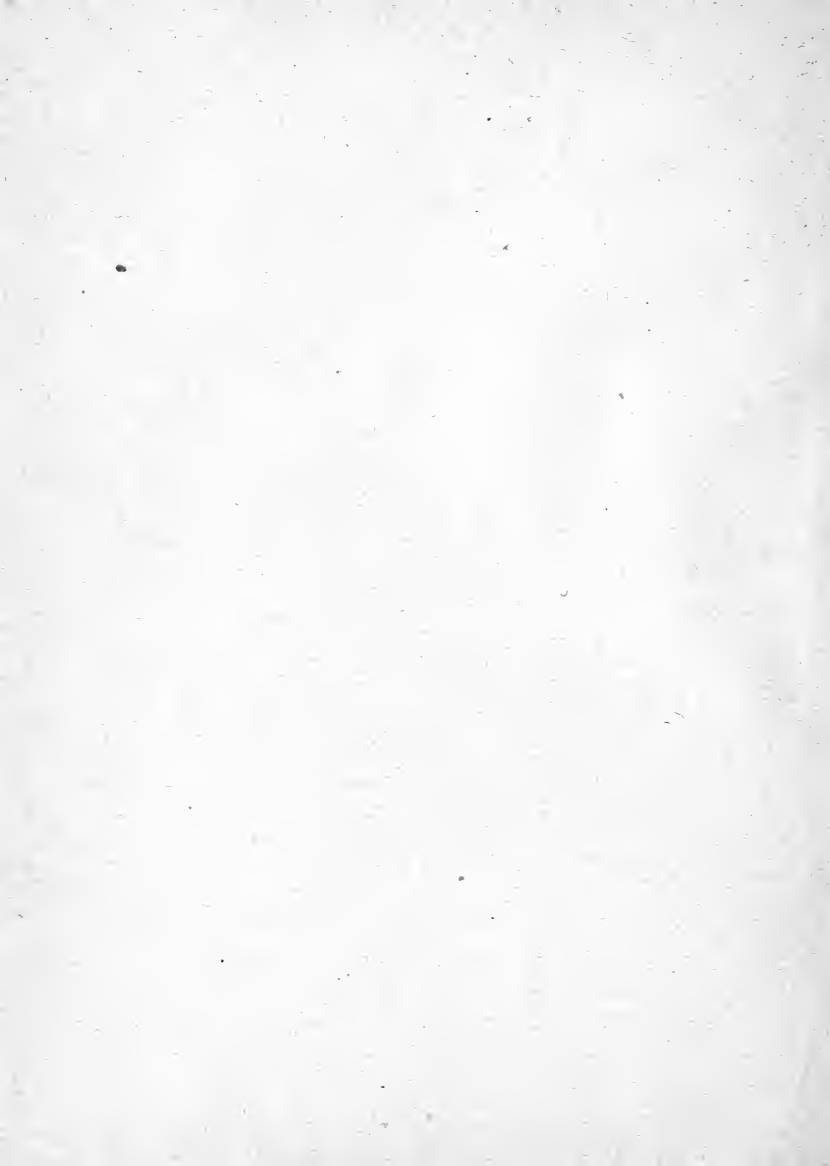
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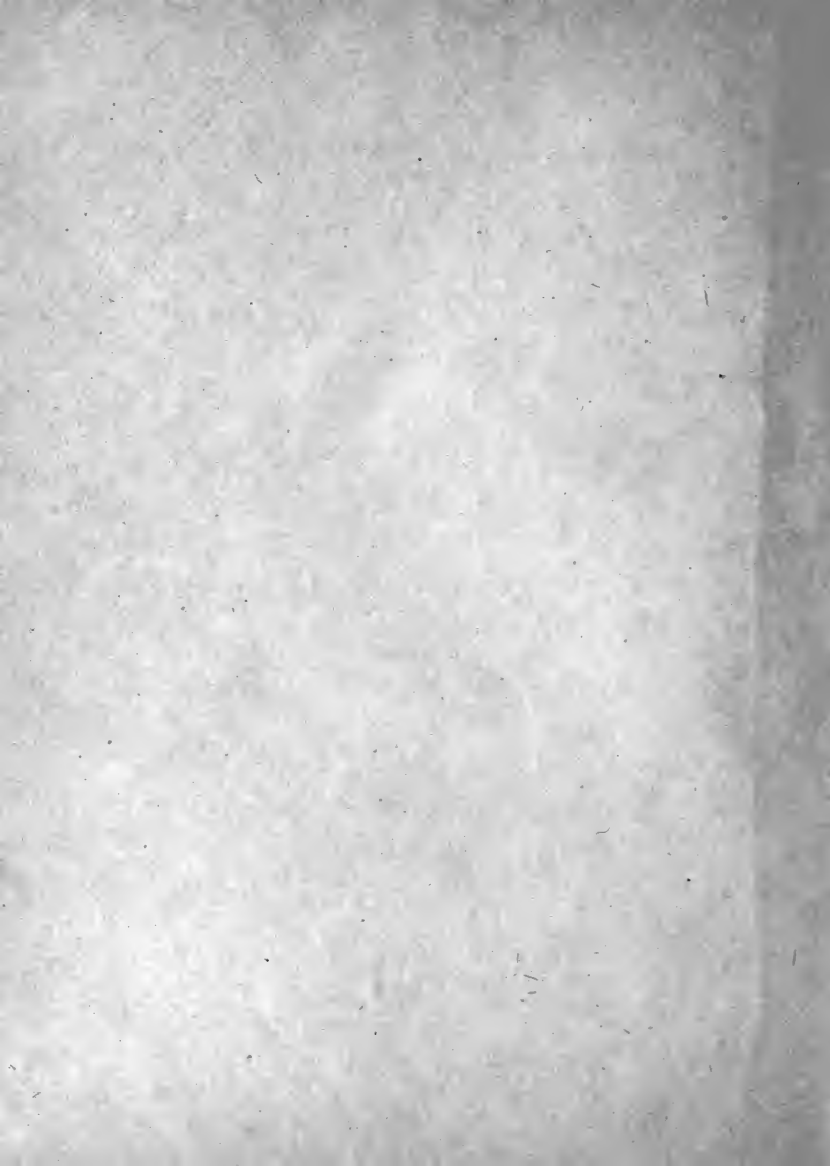
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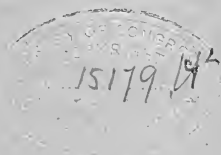
POEMS

AND

SONGS.

BY

ROBERT I. McMECHAN.



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TO

MY FAMILY AND FRIENDS,

THIS LITTLE VOLUME

IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

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POEMS AND SONGS.

THE STORY OF ALONZO.

LEO.



ALONZO, can it be that you are here?

When last we met you were a beardless boy,

But full of manly promise: bidding fair

To blossom and bear honorable fruit.

Tell me, my friend, what brought you to this place

To waste in idle thoughts the golden hours

Which God hath given you? These dungeon walls

Are not a fitting place for manhood's years,

That should be gathering harvests for the soul.

Tell me, in brief, the story of your life.

ALONZO.

You would not care to hear a tale so sad;
So full of crime and wrong! nay, you would blush
For having ever known so base a friend!
But if it be your pleasure, this will serve
To while away the melancholy hours.
You ask what brought me here? I answer, Love.

LEO.

Not love, Alonzo; how could love do this?

ALONZO.

It was not love itself, but the excess
That made such frightful shipwreck of my life.
A passion like a wild, impetuous stream,
Scorning the bounds of prudence Wisdom set,
Bore me along upon its giddy waves
And cast me helpless on the shoals of crime.
The story I will give in substance now:

A cottage stood embowered in clustering shrubs,
Beneath a mountain on whose lofty tops
The heavens seemed to rest. A lovely vale
Stretched far away in front, where silvery brooks
Babbled their songs of praise, and stately groves
To their inviting shade welcomed the birds;
While flocks and herds upon the mountain slopes,
And tinkling bells, and busy humming bees
Gave life and tranquil beauty to the scene.
This was the home of Gertrude, whom I loved.
From childhood here she lived; the light and joy
Of this secluded cot. And every year
But added charms to her fair form and face,
And graces to her gentle, winsome ways.
The time of which I wish to speak, was when
Some sixteen summers of her life had passed
And left their sunshine in her tender heart,

A crown of golden tresses on her head,
And blossoms in her cheeks and ripening lips.
Her beauty was of that peculiar type
That grows upon the senses by degrees:
Not like the full-blown rose that all admire,
But as a modest flower that tries to hide
Its lovely petals from the common gaze:
Not like a flash of light that blinds the eye,
But as a slowly dawning morn in May.
Her slender form was graceful as the fawn's;
And in the dark blue eyes so full of thought,
A tender, Indian-summer light reposed.

I often met her there, and learned to love
The goodness of her heart, that blossomed out
In gentle words and unassuming ways;
In kind unselfish acts and loving smiles.
How oft through glade, and glen, and forest-grove,

We wandered hand in hand; and clambered up
The steep hill-sides, to pluck the flowers that bloomed
In sweet unconsciousness of harm, almost
Beyond our reach. And then we'd venture on
From rugged slope to crag, and file along
With slow and cautious step the rocky ledge,
Whose top was in the clouds—and, looking down,
A yawning chasm, deep, and dark, and still,
Was waiting to entomb us. Just beyond
This narrow way, a little grassy plat
Of wondrous beauty, lay so peacefully
Asleep upon the giant mountain's lap.
This was our Eden: in this hallowed place
The happy hours flew by on wings of joy,
And all the year to us was summer-time.
'Twas here I told the tale so often told;
Here whispered into willing ears my vows;

And heard from her warm lips these words so dear—
“Alonzo, you are all the world to me!”

Thus passed one blissful year: a year so full
Of sweet endearments, I have wished since then
That all the after-time of my poor life
Had crowded into that. But soon, alas,
Too soon this paradise was lost to me,
And my full cup of joy to earth was dashed!

One day a stranger came to Gertrude's home:
A manly youth of noble form and mien.
I did not see his coming, but from her
Learned all. A friend, she said, a dear, dear friend
Whose home had been for years beyond the sea,
And whom she feared would never come again,
Was here once more; and she was overjoyed.
Her voice was full of gladness, and her face

Was all aglow with undisguised delight.
Ah! then the demon, Jealousy, began
To stir within my heart's recesses dark,
And show its hideous form. How blind and dumb
Is Jealousy! How deaf to Reason's voice!

One hour before, I could have staked my hopes
Of heaven upon her constancy and truth;
But now a dreadful fear of coming ill
Crept like a stealthy serpent through my heart.
A whisper, low at first, but gaining strength
With every syllable it uttered, filled
The sacred chamber of my inmost soul
With horrible suspicions undefined.
Oh, if I had not listened to this voice!
If I had crushed this viper at its birth,
Before its fangs had fastened on my heart!
But now the fountains, once so pure and sweet,

Are turned to bitter waters! Had I known
The end of this huge folly; only seen
The fathomless abyss to which it led,
I would have hurled Suspicion from its throne,
And blindly trusted in her truth and love.
To what a depth of ruin one may sink,
When Passion holds the reins and Reason sleeps!
We were not oft together from that time;
But when we chanced to meet, a mild reproof,
A mute appeal, was in her patient face,
And her beseeching eyes looked into mine
With pleading eloquence. Ah, had she then
But spoken words that trembled on her lips,
These prison walls would not have been my home.

I saw him once: that noble countenance
Will haunt me to the latest hour of life.
'Twas near the close of Autumn; when the Earth

Mourns her departed beauty, and her face
Is sad and wan; when melancholy winds
Are sighing in the pines, and every heart
In sympathy with nature feels the dread
Of coming woe. A spirit of unrest
Had driven me from home that dreary day,
To wander on the mountain wilds, a prey
To gloomy thoughts that rankled in my breast—
Not caring where I went or when I came,
Or what new dangers lurked beside the way.
While stupid hours dragged wearily along,
And lengthening shadows told of night's approach,
Lonely and sad I climbed the well-known path
To look once more upon the quiet nook
So dear to me through all the year gone by.
And there against the cold, unfeeling rocks
I leaned my throbbing head, and gave myself
Away to grief. "Farewell to Eden's bower!

Farewell the hope, the joy, the perfect peace,
The overflowing bliss so lately mine,
Before its gates were shut and barred to me!
O Gertrude! Gertrude! can it be the love
I gave to thee is cast away so soon?
So soon forgotten all the sacred vows
And tender scenes these rocks were witness to?"
My reverie was broken by the sound
Of footsteps on the narrow, winding path,
And voices softly blending in discourse.
I turned and saw—no need to tell you whom.
They stopped a moment on the very brink
Of that precipitous descent—his arm
Encircling her; and stooping down he pressed
A kiss upon her upturned lips. Great Heaven!
My heart was full of frenzied demons then!
My brain was all aflame; and liquid fire

Pulsed through my quivering frame. Then Gertrude

saw

And darted quickly forward to my side,

While her companion stood in mute surprise.

Blinded by rage I rushed upon him there,

And with the giant strength that passion gives,

Grappled, and hurled him down that dark abyss.

A startled cry, a groan, a dismal crash

Among the overhanging shrubs beneath—

Then all was still as death in that deep grave.

Transfixed and dumb with horror Gertrude stood;

And when the deed was done, one piercing scream

Of helpless agony smote the still air,

And died away into a piteous moan.

Too great the dreadful shock—she sank to earth;

Her young life ebbing fast, and all the light

Fading and dying out in her sweet eyes.

But ere the gentle spirit took its flight,
In broken accents from her cold, white lips,
These words, that went like daggers to the heart,
And sent a deathly chill through every limb,
Were faintly breathed: "*Alonzo, you have slain
My only brother!*" Ah, in terror then
My heart stood still! I saw myself all stained
With blood of innocence—a murderer! —
The overpowering sense of wrong, and guilt,
Crushed me to earth, as if a mighty rock
Had rolled upon me from the mountain side.
An awful darkness fell upon me then,
And all was blank.

When consciousness returned,
The pale, affrighted stars were looking down
In pity on the still, white face of her
I loved so well and wronged so cruelly.

Oh, that she could have seen my anguish then !
But better thus—better that her pure eyes
Should nevermore behold my guilty face.
I do not care to dwell upon that scene,
Or to recall the terrors of that night
That time will not efface. Suffice to tell,
These locks that were as black as raven's wing,
Next morn were whitened by the frosts of grief.
Suffice to tell, I bore the precious form
Of my lost Gertrude to her parents' home,
And gave the remnant of my wretched life
To satisfy the claims of law.

These truths
That follow now from other lips I learned :
Some years before a tyrant's hand had robbed
This people of the rights and liberties
So long enjoyed, and with an iron rod

Had ruled this land so peaceful hitherto.
New burdens were imposed; and every day
The yoke grew more oppressive, till at last
Endurance groaned, and everywhere a cry
From overburdened hearts for help arose.
A little band of heroes met, and sought
In secret council to devise a plan
To rid the country of a tyrant's rule.
Their chieftain was a young man, brave and strong;
Possessed of manly beauty, and a grace
That won the love and confidence of all.
Their numbers grew, the noble cause gained strength;
And but for one vile traitor in the ranks,
These names would doubtless grace the roll of fame.
But thus betrayed, the cause was lost; the chief
Forever banished from his native land.
To pine away and die in hostile clime,
Forbidden to return on pain of death.

For years he stayed, and tried to banish thoughts
Of home and friends; but this was all in vain.
A wish, that gained new strength from day to day,
An uncontrollable desire, once more
To see his native home and loved ones there,
Drove every thought of danger from his mind.
He came, and was received with tears of joy
And thankfulness; and in a few short days
He would have gone in safety, but a fate
Untimely met him there—you know the end—
For this was Gertrude's brother.

LEO.

May I ask,
Why Gertrude never told you this?

ALONZO.

No doubt
She often tried to tell me, but the words

Died on her lips. She feared an evil wind
Might snatch the secret ere it reached my ear,
And carry it away. She meant it well;
I do not chide her now.

But here am I,
A prisoner for life in this lone cell.
Aye, if I had a thousand lives to give,
Thus, in slow torture, all would not atone
For that one crime. In visions and in dreams,
The recollection of that monstrous deed
Glides like an apparition through my brain,
And frightens slumber from my heavy eyes.
Oh, that I might but sleep one little hour
The sleep of childhood, undisturbed and sweet!
Oh, that I might one little moment rest
This aching head and weary, weary heart,
Upon the bosom of forgetfulness!

But Conscience will not let my guilty soul
Feel once again the blessedness of peace.
Is Heaven too far away to hear my prayers?

LEO.

Not so, Alonzo! Heaven always stoops
To hear the heartfelt prayer of fallen man.

ALONZO.

But can the dews of grace bleach my brown soul?

LEO.

Grace can do wonders for you even now.
Yea, though your sins are scarlet, "they may be
As white as snow." Repent and God will save.
Return to him and he will wipe your sins,
Black though they be as night, forever out.
Give all your heart to him and trust his love,

And then the midnight sorrows of the soul
Will fade away and leave your life serene.

* * * * *

A fortnight passed. Then came a message brief
From poor Alonzo, praying me to come
In haste to him. I went, and was surprised
To see so great a change in that short time.
The hue of health was gone; he lay so still
I almost feared he nevermore would speak.
His face was thin and wan, but in the eyes
A peaceful, restful, holy light reposed.
His countenance had lost the haggard look,
And bore the impress of a mind at rest.
He grasped my hand, and told in tender tones
How God had washed away his guilt and shame,
And filled his soul so full of peace and joy.
“I had a wondrous dream last night,” he said.

“I thought an angel visitant had come,
And stood beside me here; then took my hand
And bade me come. The ponderous door swung back;
I followed where he led. A river, dark
And deep, lay at our feet; but just beyond
Its rolling waves a soft and steady light
Marked out a shining path from shore to shore.
My guardian angel walked upon the stream,
And beckoned me along with outstretched arm.
In fear, and awe, and hope I followed on—
Now sinking in the waves so cold, and now
Upheld and strengthened by his help and smile.
And as we neared the silvery pebbled shore,
Oh, what a lovely, soul-entrancing scene,
Spread far and wide before my wondering gaze!
Only a little of the things beheld
And learned in that short time, can I recount.

“I saw a great white throne. There was no sun,
Or moon; there were no stars—but there was light,
As soft as twilight and as clear as noon,
Suffused forever through the atmosphere!
And from the myriads around that throne,
The songs and hallelujahs, and the voice
Of instruments arose, and swelled until
The air was tremulous with sweet accord.
And here and there were flocks of snow-white lambs,
Safe in their princely Shepherd’s tender care,
Disporting on the verdant slopes of hills,
Or sipping pleasure from the crystal springs.
And there were labyrinths of fadeless bloom
That never lose their delicate perfumes;
Where white-robed maidens decked their flowing
hair,
Or strolled in blissful leisure by the streams
Of living waters, on whose velvet banks

“Were spreading trees that never drop their leaves;
And where, through endless spring and summer-time,
The songsters never weary in their praise.
And seas of living verdure stretched away,
As far as eye could reach or fancy fly.
And there were undulating hills and plains;
Wide valleys, interspersed with spicy groves;
Delicious gardens, full of luscious fruits;
And lovely dells, and grottoes, quiet nooks,
And waterfalls, and lakes as clear as glass.

“A countless multitude drew near to us—
There was my Gertrude, waiting on the shore
To welcome me—her cheeks no longer pale,
As when she faded, like a tender plant,
So suddenly away one awful night;
But she was beautiful and lovely now,
Beyond the power of language to express.

“The summer glories of that wondrous clime
Beamed in her face, and sparkled in her eyes;
And the exquisite grandeur of that home
Endowed her perfect form with queenly grace.
She took my hand—the shock of joy so great
Dissolved the blissful spell, and I awoke.


“It was a dream, but more than a mere dream—
A premonition that my time is near;
A welcome message from my Father’s house,
To come and share the blessedness of home.
I know in whom I trust and am content.
If such were mine, I gladly would exchange
The grandest palace that the world contains,
To realize one hour my happy dream.”

His voice had softened to a whisper low,
The up-turned eyes were fixed in earnest gaze

Upon some scene of beauty far away;
And then I saw that on his pallid brow.
The dews of death were falling, and I knew
The change that comes to all had come to him.
O wonderful exchange! a gloomy cell
For infinite abodes of light and joy.
That dream was *real* now; and hand in hand
Alonzo walked with Gertrude on the shore.



THE CHRISTIAN'S HOME.

 BEYOND the restless sea of life,
The busy scenes of toil and strife;
Beyond the swelling tide of woes,
There is a land of sweet repose—
A home above the starry blue,
Where weary pilgrims, tried and true,
Find rest, secure from every ill,
In pastures green, by waters still.

While here within the vale of tears,
Grief maketh sad the heart; and fears
And shadows come, and doubts and pains—
There, in that home of light, peace reigns.
There streams of endless pleasure roll
In waves of gladness through the soul;

And every want is well supplied,
And every wish is gratified.

No mortal eye hath ever seen
Its lovely vales of living green,
Its crystal streams and radiant plains :
No ear hath ever caught the strains
Of wondrous melodies, that thrill
The souls of the redeemed, and fill
The air of that delicious clime
With tones of joy and praise sublime.

Loved ones whom we have lost are there,
With crowns of gold, in garments fair,
Waiting to take us by the hand
And show us all that beauteous land.
There weary feet will tire no more,
There sorrow, pain and death are o'er;

And all is peace, and joy, and love,
In that delightful home above.

And can it be, the heart still clings
To earth, and all its paltry things?
Can we prefer its sordid gains,
To treasures where our Savior reigns?
The Christian's home! oh, who would miss
Its pure delights, its perfect bliss?
Who would not strive to enter there,
And all its dearest blessings share?

A FRIEND INDEED.



WHEN skies are softly beaming,
And days are bright and long;
When life to us is seeming
A garden full of song—

Though time may pass unheeded,
And Pleasure's cup be sweet,
One Friend at least is needed,
To make our joys complete.

When days are dark and dreary,
And nights so slowly end;
When sad the heart, and weary,
Ah! then we need a Friend.

Some one to soothe our sorrow,
And check the bitter tears;
Some one from whom to borrow
Hope, for the coming years.

But dearest friends may fail us,
On whom our hearts are stayed;
And Brutus-like assail us
When most we need their aid.

There is a Friend, however,
In whom we may confide:
He will forsake us never,
Whatever ills betide.

One who will cheer our sadness
In darkest hours of need;
One who will share our gladness—
This is a Friend indeed!

He only can defend us
From Satan's cruel power;
He only can befriend us
In Death's momentous hour.

Strength, meekness, pity tender
In this dear Person blend—
Our Savior! our Defender!
Our gentle, loving Friend!

WHIP-POOR-WILL.



SPRING-TIME day of rarest grace
Has passed away. A holy calm
Rests like a smile on Nature's face,
And Evening's breath is full of balm.

On such an eve, when Twilight's hour
Repose to wearied Nature brings;
When other birds in leafy bower,
In sweet contentment fold their wings;
The whip-poor-will, in lone retreats,
Takes up his weird and plaintful song,
And to the night, in trust repeats,
Mysterious hints of helpless wrong.

Hark! hear that trill

On yonder hill—

The cry of the lonely whip-poor-will;

Coming so suddenly, wild and shrill,

From the forest still:

“Whip-poor-will! Whip-poor-will!”

And hast thou suffered wrong, lone one,

From ruthless hands or cruel Fate?

To love, to cheer thee, are there none?

Hast thou no home? no gentle mate?

Or dost thou stay so long awake

Some sad and lonely watch to keep?

What dreams thy fitful slumbers break,

While other birds so sweetly sleep?

Hark! hear again;

That plaintful strain

Falls on the ear as a cry of pain,

Startling the echoes that lie so still
On the neighboring hill—
“Whip-poor-will! Whip-poor-will!”

What means that strange complaining cry?

Oh, who has dared to wrong thee so?
How was it done? and when? and why?

Pray tell me all I wish to know.

What! *Whip poor Will*? Why whip him when

He claims thy pity? Hath he erred?

Thy pity is uncalled-for, then—

Thou art an inconsistent bird.

Again that cry,
From the hill-top high,
Comes gliding down as from the sky;
On the air of night now growing chill,
Through the darkness still—
“Whip-poor-will! Whip-poor-will!”

I speak unwisely—thou art right!

Mercy with justice e'er should go;
And when the chast'ning rod doth smite,
Pity should gently heal the blow.

There is a sermon in thy song—
Condemn the *sin*, the *sinner* treat
With love! May I remember long,
O noble bird, thy lesson sweet.

Lone whip-poor-will,
Now once more thrill
The ear with thy so piteous trill—
Hushed is that voice; forsaken and still
Is the shadowy hill.
Farewell, whip-poor-will!

WELCOME TO SPRING.



INTER'S reign is broken,
Surely broken;
Blue birds gave the token
That the time was near.
Nature's pulse is beating,
Quicker beating;
At the tender greeting
Of the Spring so dear.

CHORUS—Hail! lovely Spring,
Thy praise we sing.
In song and rhyme,
And merry chime,
Let everything
Welcome the Spring.

Spring-time's morn is breaking,

Brightly breaking;

Earth is just awaking

From her long repose.

Brooks have found their voices,

Silvery voices;

Every rill rejoices,

Dancing as it goes.

Happy birds are singing,

Sweetly singing;

Joyous notes are ringing

Through the dreamy air.

Tender buds are swelling,

Gently swelling;

Everything is telling

That the Spring is here.

Zephyrs coy are playing,
Softly playing;
Sunbeams bright are straying
Over all the ground.
Grasses sweet are growing,
Greener growing;
Genial Spring is sowing
Blessings all around.

CHORUS—Hail! lovely Spring,
Thy praise we sing.
In song and rhyme,
And merry chime,
Let everything
Welcome the Spring.

ISLE OF INNOCENCE.



HAT wretched man,

So sad and wan,

From whom you would, perchance, in terror flee,

Was once a babe upon his mother's knee!

A pure, sweet babe that knew not how to sigh;

That looked for heaven in his mother's eye,

And thought no bliss was equal to her smile—

A laughing child, so free from sin and guile.

Alas! Alas! those days are gone; and now

Guilt sits enthroned upon his troubled brow.

His home was on an island, small and fair;

And well for him if he had tarried there.

A boat once launched on that mysterious shore

Was gone to sea forever—nevermore
Could it return. No arm, however stout,
Could stem that current ever flowing out.
It was a happy home, where flowers bloom
Throughout the year; where birds of gorgeous plume
Made every grove a paradise of song,
And summer days went dreamily along.
Heaven smiled serenely on his morning way,
And angel visitants came every day.

A few exotic plants of beauty rare,
Depended on his culture and his care;
But growing tired of tending gentle flowers,
He wandered one day from those quiet bowers,
Only a little distance, where the breeze
Invited to the shade of spreading trees.
The Tempter met him there with winning smile,
And with such words as these did soon beguile

His yielding heart:

“Come, youth, and go with me!

’Tis pleasant on the sea,

The boundless sea!

Why should you spend your time

In this insipid clime,

And waste your youthful hours

In nursing sickly flowers?

Oh, come and sail with me!”

He followed him—too eager for the change;

Longing for other scenes beyond his range—

Through vales enchanting, meadows fresh and green,

Led by a way along a murmuring stream,

Down to the shore, and to a waiting boat.

And though a fear of evil doubtless smote

This youth, he faltered not—a moment stood,

Then launched to sea. Their bark the hungry flood

Caught up and carried helplessly away.

And must he perish? must he ever stray?
To that blest island can he nevermore
Return, and be what he was once before?
Oh, must he listen, hopeless, to the roar
Of angry billows, guarding all that shore—
A wandering waif upon the sea of sin?
No, there is hope and mercy yet for him!
There is a world beyond these restless waves,
Where sorrow can not come; and where no graves
Were ever made—a place where guilt and fear
Are never known, and every lingering tear
Is wiped away. A ship of noble form
Is on this sea, out-riding every storm;
Searching for wrecks wherever they may be,
And giving all who will a passage free
To that safe port of peace not far away—
The blessed realm of everlasting day.

IN MEMORIAM.



LIFE has grown dark—

A mother—faithful, tender, kind;

A friend as true as friend can be;

An earnest Christian almost free

From faults is gone. Where could Death find

A brighter mark?

Our grief is deep.

Friends have performed the last sad rites—

Her body sleeps beneath the sod,

Her spirit has returned to God;

And through the lonesome days and nights

We mourn and weep.

Our hearts are sore.
How lone, how desolate the place!
Can this be home, since she is gone?
What is there left to look upon,
Since that dear form and that pure face
Are here no more?

Heavy the cross.
We sadly miss her counsel sweet,
That often kept our hearts from guile—
Her gentle voice and loving smile;
Her Christian graces so complete—
How great the loss!

Our sorrow grows.
There is the empty chair, where oft
She sat and read the Book of Truth,
So dearly loved from early youth;

And there, in accents sweet and soft,
Her hymns arose.

Our loss, her gain.
We deeply mourn, but God can see
What's best. Though sorrow-stricken now,
Submissive to his will we bow.
He gave, he took, and blessed be
His holy name.



ALMOST PERSUADED.



ALMOST persuaded! Tremblingly he stops,
Entangled in a maze of doubt and fear;
Self-righteousness, and all his weakly props,
Are failing now. He knows there's danger near,
And feels that suddenly the gathering storms
Of wrath divine may sweep the plains of sin;
And that on every side the mountain forms
Of God's endearing love are near to him.
And yet he hesitates, and will not flee
To them for safety. Well he knows the ground
On which he stands is insecure; and he
Can see the waves of retribution round
Him higher rise, and yet he will not make
An effort to escape. Long he has braved
The danger; still he waits, and will not take

The outstretched hand of Jesus, and be saved.
The World and Satan try to hold him back;
Friends, guardian angels, and the still small voice
Entreat him to go on. A mental rack
That trembling soul endures who makes no choice.
Almost persuaded sinner, why not solve
Without delay the problem of your fate?
A bold, decisive step—a firm resolve—
Trusting in God, and you are safe. Then wait
Not for a more convenient time or place.
Beneath your feet eternal burnings lie,
And, turning back, death stares you in the face—
Go quickly forward! to the Savior fly!

Oh, slight not the voice that is pleading to-day!
Oh, grieve not the Spirit, so gentle, away!
Lest the harvest should pass, and the summer be o'er,
And these tender entreaties be heard nevermore.

FULLY PERSUADED.



KNOW that Jesus gave
His precious life, to save
My soul from endless woe.

He calls to me to-day;
There's danger in delay,
I am resolved to go.

So oft by sins distressed,
So oft by fears depressed,
Why should I longer wait?
To wait might be to fail—
Then mine the bitter wail,
“Not saved! too late, too late!”

My hopes are insecure;
Why should I still endure
 Suspense and vague alarm?
I will no longer doubt,
No longer be without
 A refuge from the storm.

False Tempter, go thy way!
Henceforth I trust I may
 Refuse to hear thy voice.
Stay, gentle Spirit, stay!
Permit me not to stray,
 Support me in my choice.

Fully persuaded! now
I take the solemn vow,
 That binds me, Lord, to thee.
Fully persuaded: Oh,

What joy it is to know
My soul from guilt is free!

For thy great love to me,
So wonderful, so free,
This is my offering—small,
Weak, trifling though it be:
Here, Lord, I give to thee
My heart, my life, my all.

AUTUMN.



ATURE'S mood is meditative:

Silence reigns on every hill:

Peaceful, tranquil all the landscape,

All the air is mute and still.

Faintly sigh the lazy streamlets:

Birds forget their cheerful lays—

Sitting lonely, sadly thinking

Of the lost, long Summer days.

Autumn comes: the sleepy sunbeams

Lose their way through misty skies:

While the shadow of her presence

On the distant valley lies.

Autumn comes: the pensive maiden,
Daughter of the Summer dear:
She who has within her keeping
Golden bounties of the year.

Robed in garments, rich and gorgeous,
With a face of calm repose;
Thoughtful, silent, moving slowly,
Up and down the earth she goes.

She is ever melancholy;
Seldom smiles, but often sighs:
And the light comes soft and hazy
From her languid, dreamy eyes.

Through the fields, and through the woodlands,
All along the sober streams,
Quiet, listless, she is wandering,
Half awake and half in dreams.

Surely she has known some sorrow
That no other heart may know ;
Some great grief has cast its shadow
In the way that she must go.



LOVE'S TRIBUTE.



It is pleasant now and then, with half-closed eyes
To dream a day-dream of the time, dear wife,
When first united in love's holiest ties,
We sailed together down the stream of life.

How real then was love's delicious dream!
How light our hearts, and free from cares and fears!
The future bright with promise, and the stream
Bearing us smoothly on to coming years.

But as the years sped on they brought us fears
To temper hope; sorrow to go with joy:
Sunshine and shadow, mingled smiles and tears,
Alternately to comfort and annoy.

And this was well: the higher, nobler forms
Of earthly bliss are not all peace and joy.
The air would be impure without the storms,
And precious metals need their base alloy.

And yet, though skies are something changeful now,
And winds are sometimes rude, though youth has
 flown,

And cares have left their mark upon the brow—
Our love has deeper, purer, stronger grown.

Without thy presence, life it seems would be
As dark as night when friendly lights depart.
Only the Savior who redeemeth me,
Can claim a larger portion of my heart.

CHERUB WAIFS.



PEARLY gate, they say,
Is left ajar sometimes,
By angels on their way
To visit other climes.

A cherub seeing this,
Left off its happy play,
And strolled in thoughtless bliss
Outside the gate one day.

It soon was gone.
In joy and mirth
It wandered on
From star to star,

Through space afar
Until it came to earth.

We took this stranger in—
This waif without a name :
So small and free from sin—
 So tired and weak
 It could not speak
To tell us whence it came.

Then, after years had flown,
Once more a cherub form
Came helpless to our home :
 Another dove
 For us to love
And shelter from the storm.
These two, we know not why,
To us were loaned—not given.

God wants them by and by:
Then, any day
The angels may
Convey them home to heaven.



SNOW-BIRDS.



NOW the snow-birds, to and fro,
Trip so lightly o'er the snow;
Hearts so brave are beating warm,
And they care not for the storm.

Tripping lightly o'er the snow,
Chirping sweetly, talking low,
Little snow-birds come and go.

Many a tribe a home have sought
Where the snow-storm cometh not;
But the faithful snow-birds stay,
Cheering us upon our way.

Tripping lightly o'er the snow,
Chirping sweetly, talking low,
Friendly snow-birds come and go.

Many birds have idle time,
In their sunny, southern clime;
These, so busy all the day,
Find no time to waste away.

Tripping lightly o'er the snow,
Chirping sweetly, talking low,
Sprightly snow-birds come and go.

Busy, busy doing good,
Working for their daily food,
Making sunshine while they go
Barefoot through the winter snow.

Tripping lightly o'er the snow,
Chirping sweetly, talking low,
Happy snow-birds come and go.

Bearing bravely with their lot,
Patient, cheerful, murmuring not,

Though so few their comforts be—
Like the snow-birds, oh may we,
 Patiently our way pursue,
Cheerfully our duty do,
With a purpose strong and true!



THE SUMMER RAINS.



Oh, the pleasant summer rain!
Coming from the distant main,
Falling softly, as a strain,
In a sweet, subdued refrain!

Thankfully the flow'rs look up,
Holding each its little cup,
To be filled again, again,
By the gentle summer rain!

Oh, the joyous summer rain!
Dancing down the grassy lane,
Peeping through the window pane,
Laughing in a roguish vein;
Dropping with a merry sound,
Sparkling pearls upon the ground—

We should never once complain
Of the joyous summer rain!

Oh, the boisterous summer rain!
Dashing, rushing like a train,
Over hill and over plain,
Over fields of waving grain.
How it clatters on the roofs,
Like a thousand tiny hoofs,
Like a host of sprites insane—
Oh, the boisterous summer rain!

THE PILGRIM.



No resting-place for the pilgrim is here,
For a stranger he is in this wilderness drear;
He has no abiding city in time;
No palace could hold him; he knows of a clime
In a far distant land--no longer to roam.
His rest will be sweet when he reaches his home!

No rest for him here, but with staff in his hand
He seeks for his home in that beautiful land.
His hands are employed, but his thoughts are not
here,
For they wander away to that pure, sunny sphere
Where his kind Father dwells; and his friends gone
before
Are waiting for him when his journey is o'er.

Along the straight path and the narrow he goes,
Through burning deserts of sorrows and woes;
Cool fountains invite him, and shady retreats,
But he turns not aside, for he seeks higher seats
In the palace of God; in realms bright as day,
There to bask in the smiles of his Savior for aye.

And now he has come to that dread river's brink;
From its dark rolling tide will his mortal heart
shrink?

No! over the waters, all golden and light,
The beautiful city arises in sight!
And above the roar of the hungry flood
He hears angels singing their praises to God.

HIS FIRST LOVE.



HE story of his first—his only love—

So long since dead,

He told to me in simple words; and this

Was what he said :

“She was a little girl when first we met,

So fair and small!

I was some taller than my dog, and she

Not quite so tall.

“Not far away, across the meadow stood

An humble cot,

Festoon'd with creeping vines. To me there was

No lovelier spot.

“And there she dwelt—I need not tell her name—

Suffice to say

It rhymed with fairy. Should you care to know,

You surely may.

“And childhood’s sports, and childhood’s rainbow
hopes,

We loved to share ;

And oft together we would plan and build

Castles in the air.

“And hand in hand we strolled through fields and
woods,

In quest of flowers.

The summer days passed on so pleasantly,

They seemed but hours.

“Her voice was low and gentle as the dove’s ;

Her face so fair !

“The home of wandering threads of golden light
Her tresses were.

“How fast she grew! how beautiful and good!
For earth too good;
And so God took her, just upon the verge
Of womanhood.

“You ask me if I loved this gentle maid?
I only say,
When near her I was happy; only sad
When far away.

“I do not boast to you that she loved me;
But this I know,
That she was joyous when I came—demure
When I would go.

“And when they laid her in the tomb, and hid
That form from view,
It seemed to me that in her grave my heart
Was buried too.

“We chose for her a quiet resting-place
Within a dell.
A mossy stone now marks the hallowed spot
Where she sleeps well.”

DISHEARTENED—A FRAGMENT.



TAKE courage, Claudius! The darkest cloud
May quickly pass, or be dissolved in light.
There is an end to every earthly ill.

The Winter of affliction and distress
Will for a season hold its gloomy sway,
And then the blue-bird notes of hope and joy
May thrill the pulses of thy heart again.
Be patient, friend; the road is very long
That has no turning-point. Hope on! hope on!
Thy path so narrow and so rugged now,
May lose itself in verdure and in bloom.

Ah no, Horatio, this can never be—
Can never, never be! for *Hope* is gone,

And I will see her snowy wings no more.
Spring-time may come to you, and all the world,
But not to me; for you the birds may sing,
The flowers bloom, but not for me. Alas!
The voices of the Spring will nevermore
Awaken echoes in my lonely heart.
There must the Winter of regrets remain.
Remorseful winds sweep o'er neglected wastes,
And moan and sob among the naked groves,
Where lie so many faded, fallen leaves,
Nipped by untimely frosts. I see it all—
The truth stands out so painfully distinct—
My life has been a failure too complete.
These weary eyes look back with hopeless gaze
Over the desert stretch of wasted years,
And far away upon the dreary sea,
Where drift the helpless wrecks of ruined hopes.
Where now are all the plans, and high resolves;

The noble purposes that fired my heart?


Alas, all gone! The sun will set in gloom:

And my poor, disappointed life will end

In darkness and despair! * * * * *



LINES ON THE DEATH OF A SISTER.

 WAS almost morn : around her little bed,
We silent watch were keeping ;
So low our whispered words, so soft our tread,
We seemed but shadows, creeping.

With some relief, and yet with restless dread,
We watched her troubled sleeping :
And if, at times, rebellious tears were shed,
There was a cause for weeping.

For well we knew too soon that other sleep,
So long, and deep, and dreamless,
Would still her breathing, o'er her fair face creep,
And make those bright eyes beamless.

And many heartfelt prayers went trembling up
From bosoms, aching, smarting;
That God would give us grace to drink the cup—
The bitter cup of parting.

She needed not our prayers; God's peace, so true,
So sweet, to her was given:
And she had nothing more that night to do
But sleep—and wake in Heaven.

SWEET SOMETIME.



IN the heart there dwells a fond belief,
To which we cling from day to day;
That a time will come when care and grief,
As a cloud will pass forever away.

CHORUS—Oh when, oh when, will that time be here—
That sweet sometime of joy complete?
We long to breathe its balmy air;
We long to rest our weary feet!

Of that time we muse, and fancies take
Their forms and hues from what it seems:
And we watch and wait for morn to break,
After the night of sorrowful dreams.

Is it coming soon, that sometime fair,
For which we hope and wait so long—
With its soft sunny skies, its beauties rare,
With its wealth of joy, and treasures of song?

Will it ever come—that better time?
The pure in heart are sure of this:
Of a home beyond earth's changing clime,
In that sweet sometime of wondrous bliss.

CHORUS—Oh when, oh when, will that time be here—
That sweet sometime of joy complete?
We long to breathe its balmy air;
We long to rest our weary feet!

THAT DREAM.



YOU told me of a dream that came
To you the other night—
A charming dream: this is the same,
If memory is right.

You slept, but Fancy still worked on,
And wove a pleasant dream:
It seemed that you were out upon
A winding, placid stream.

The boat was large enough for two,
And smoothly did it glide
Over the waters, clear and blue,
And I was by your side.

The trees in groups, and stately rows,
 Stood close along the banks;
And birds upon their pendent boughs
 Sang joyous songs of thanks.

And here and there the grassy slopes
 Came down to bathe their feet:
Summer had come, with smiles and hopes,
 And all the air was sweet.

The softest light was in the sky,
 And gentle every breeze;
As with the current you and I
 Glided among the trees.

Shall I the meaning of your dream
 Try to interpret now?
Though some things are not what they seem,
 It must be this I trow:

The boat just large enough for two,

No doubt means wedded life:

The stream is Time—now therefore you

Will surely be my *wife*.



WHAT THEN?



OUR lives are frail and fleeting,
As bubbles on the wave:
And every heart is beating
A quick-step to the grave.

Where is thy pathway tending?—
Over life's hills and slopes—
And what will be the ending
Of all thy plans and hopes?

Oh, when life's dream is over,
And all its joys are fled;
Will angels love to hover
Around thy dying bed?

Are wealth and worldly pleasures
Thy fond ambition's goal?
Ah! shoulds't thou gain earth's treasures
And lose thy priceless soul—

What then? Will gold requite thee
For such a fearful loss?
Let higher aims incite thee—
The crown is worth the cross!

A voice of love is pleading,
In accents low and sweet:
Oh, trust the Spirit's leading,
To guide thy wandering feet!

Wait not until to-morrow
Thy peace with Heaven to make—
Lest sudden, hopeless sorrow
Thy soul should overtake.

A FAIRY TALE OF SPRING.



SPRING, the sweet and winsome beauty,
She the coy, the wayward, playful,
Loving, tender-hearted maiden ;
Charming as a dream of childhood,
With a smile upon her young face,
And a love-light in her blue eye,
And a grace in every movement,
Trips along o'er barren landscapes,
Singing sweetly, singing gayly :
"I am coming, I am coming,
Look up, Nature, oh, be joyful !
I will bring the sunshine to you,
I will bring you pleasant showers,
Balmy zephyrs, birds and flowers.

“Cheer up, woodlands! I will give you
Softest verdure for a carpet;
Clothe your naked limbs with garments,
Deck them with the greenest chaplets—
Make you rich with clustering foliage.”

Now she calls the ruddy sunbeams :
“Come, ye bright and genial sunbeams,
With your radiant faces smiling;
Dance all through the air and make it
Pleasant, balmy, soft and dreamy;
Rest upon the earth, and warm it
Into fruitfulness and verdure;
Seek the dead and buried flowers,
Wake them from their sleep and bring them
Up into the light of Heaven.
Bring the grasses from their snow-graves,
Whisper words of promise to them;

“ Put the hearts of plants in motion,
Make them throb, and send their life-blood
Up through palsied stems and branches ;
Till the low shrubs in the gardens,
And the great trees in the forest,
Waking from their sleep so death-like,
Gather leaf, and bud, and blossom.
Come, ye fruitful, gentle showers,
Haste and help the genial sunbeams ;
Go before, or follow after—
Help to clothe the earth with beauty,
That the heart of every creature
May rejoice and praise its Maker ;
That the Earth, as well as Heaven,
May declare his wondrous glory.”

And the sunbeams, warm and cheerful,
From their home of light and splendor,

In their golden chariots hasten,
Light upon the Earth, and make it,
With their kisses and caresses,
Warm and genial, green and fruitful;
Decking it with flowers and verdure.
And the showers, gently, kindly,
From their misty homes in cloud-land,
Come in tiny drops and vanish,
Falling like a benediction
Softly on the fields and meadows.

Now the sweet and winsome beauty
Stands upon the highest hill-top,
Calling all the wandering birds back;
Calling in the tenderest accents,
Wooing them with words of kindness;
“Come, O birds of every feather,
Ye whom cruel Winter banished

“From your native home and climate.
Winter now is gone, ye need not
Fear his angry looks or gestures:
Come back to your empty houses,
Come back to your homes forsaken,
They are very sad without you:
Come and bring your music with you,
For I wish to gladden Nature;
She has long been melancholy.”

And the birds in far-off climates,
Hear the voice of Spring so tender,
Calling to them in the distance—
And they haste on flashing pinions
To obey the welcome bidding;
Wing their way with hope and gladness,
Singing on their homeward journey.
Then she calls the gentle Zephyrs:

“Come, ye Zephyrs, mild and pleasant,
Ye, whose steps are light as snow-flakes
Falling on the river’s bosom;
And whose tones are low and lispig,
As the soothing voice of love is—
Come ye, from your hiding-places,
Play upon the cheeks of maidens,
As they wander forth at evening—
In and out among their tresses,
Kiss their lips and tell them secrets;
Cheer their hearts and make them merry
After such a cruel Winter.”

And the Zephyrs, gentle, timid,
Half afraid, yet ever willing,
Hear the voice of Spring, and softly
From their secret hiding-places.
Come on tiptoe at her bidding ;

Glide about from hill to valley,
Talking in a low, sweet whisper,
Playing on the cheeks of maidens,
In and out among their tresses,
As they wander forth at evening.

Thus the ministers of Spring-time
Cheerfully obey her bidding:
Up and down on every hill-side,
To and fro through every valley,
Filling Earth with life and beauty.
Ever greener grows the landscape,
And the timid flowers are peeping,
And the tender grass is creeping,
Up to meet the loving sunshine.
Now the mellow air is ringing
With the notes of joyous singing;
While in garden and in forest

Tender buds begin to venture,
Out into the air inviting,
And the loving sunbeams kiss them
Till they grow suffused with blushes.
In the forests, thicker, greener,
Grow the clusters of the leaflets,
Till the limbs and twigs are hidden
With their new and handsome garments;
And the landscape now is gorgeous
With its wealth of living verdure.

Thus the gentle, winsome beauty,
She, the Queen of all the seasons,
Yearly comes to Earth, and scatters
Smiles and blessings all around her.

HOME AT LAST.



HE is gone! that good, that aged man
Has laid his feeble body down to sleep:
The sleep that makes all mortals look so wan—
And friends, bereaved, stand round his bed and
weep.

Long did that patriarch stay: years went and came,
And still he walked upon the shores of Time;
Supporting, with his staff, his trembling frame,
Waiting his summons to that distant clime.

His white locks in the wintry wind would float,
And oft his dim and anxious eyes would roam
Out o'er the waters, for that little boat
That was to carry him so safely home.

Yet patiently he tarried till the time

When to remove him 'twould be God's good will ;
He bore life's ills with fortitude sublime,

And murmured not, but watched and waited still.

But when that time would be, no one could tell :

The harvest waits until the reapers come ;
The full-grown fruit was ripened, then it fell,
And angels gathered it and took it home.

With this our friend, how kindly God has dealt !

To him he did life's rosy morning give,
When fresh and pure and gushing joys were felt,
And when it was a pleasant thing to live.

He did not take him off in youthful prime,

When hope and love and vigor fed his pride ;
Nor did he take him in his life's noon-time,
But lengthened out his span till eventide.

Then, when in weakness, age came creeping on,
And twilight fell, and all was growing dark;
And health and strength and earthly joys were
gone—

Then Death came for him in his mystic bark.

When senses were departing one by one,
Faces were growing strange, and every tie
That bound him here would shortly be undone—
Oh, God was merciful to let him die!

He did not fear the change: he did not shrink.

“I go so pretty to my home,” he said.

Death led him on so softly, one would think

He were the kindest, gentlest friend he had.

He noiselessly unbarred the shattered door

Of that old crumbling prison-house of clay;

And then the soul, that four-score years, or more,
Had been imprisoned, joyous soared away.

Long was that good man's life: the end was mild—
Calm as the closing of a summer-day!
He came into the world a harmless child,
And harmless as a child he passed away.



SHE TOO IS GONE.



HE too is gone! and side by side

Their withered bodies lie.

Her spirit from the flesh untied,

Has found its mate on high.

They shared each other's hopes and fears:

In youth she was his pride;

In age, the solace of his years—

And he, her staff and guide.

They shared life's blessings and its ills,

Its sunshine and its frown;

As hand in hand they climbed its hills,

And slowly tottered down.

So long a partner by his side,
How could she stay behind
When he was gone? Could Death divide
Their souls so intertwined?

A faithful wife, and mother true,
Has entered on her rest.
Friends know what love to her was due,
And hold her memory blest.

LOVE GOD.



LOVE God with all your heart;

For there is none

On earth below, in heaven above,

So well entitled to your love,

So worthy of a part

Of all you own.

Friends may be kind and true,

But more is he.

An angel tongue could never tell

What depth of love and mercy dwell

In that large heart for you—

For you and me.

Is it a pleasant thing
 To breathe and live?
 He shields you from the darts of Death,
 And constantly supplies your breath,
 And all that life can bring
 Doth freely give.

His presence goes with you
 Through hours of light;
 And while your wearied body sleeps,
 He slumbers not, but ever keeps
 A faithful watch all through
 The silent night.


When ruined and undone—
 With not an eye
 To pity, not an arm to save—
 He loved us even then, and gave

His dear, his only Son,
For us to die.

Angels in wonder pause—
Christ suffer thus!
Hunger and thirst, and cold and heat,
And weariness, and aching feet,
And pain and death—because—
He pitied us?

How pay to him—or when—
The smallest part
Of what we owe? To give our all
Would be a recompense too small.
Oh! we should love him then
With all the heart!

'TIS SWEET TO DIE.

 IS sweet to die! no more to bear
The heat and burden of the day;
But lay forever down the load of care
That we have borne so long, and pass away
Without a lingering doubt, without a fear,
To that blest land where all the endless year
Is fairer than the fairest May.

When health and strength and energies are fled,
And helpless age comes on with tottering tread,
And all the friends we loved so well are dead:
When joys are fading one by one—
Oh! if our work is only done,
And Faith, with clear and steady eye,

Can see the mansions in the sky—

'Tis sweet to lie serenely down, and die!

'Tis sweet to die! when cold and stern

Misfortunes follow us where'er we go;

When friends are fickle, and too late we learn

That all their friendship is but empty show.

When all alone we meet the storms of life,

And all alone we struggle with the tide;

With none to cheer our spirits in the strife,

Or lend a helping hand our bark to guide;

When not a friendly look, or tone, or smile,

Or word of hope is given to beguile

The heart from thoughts of sorrow for awhile—

If God in mercy hear our cry,

And pitying angels linger nigh,

Ah, then 'tis sweet to turn aside, and die!

BOB WHITE.



HAVE you ever heard
Of the little bird
That was lost and never found?
Be it false or true,
I will tell to you,
The story that goes the round.

Once on a time
(So says the rhyme),
Two royal quails were blest
One day to find
The nicest kind
Of birdies in their nest.

Just four they were,
So plump and fair—
A very pretty sight!
They named them all,
And one did call
(The eldest one) Bob White.

A prince was he,
And soon would be
A king, to rule and guide.
Quite fast he grew,
And handsome, too—
He was their joy and pride—

Their dearest pet!
And oft they let
This young prince have his way.
“I’m quite too large

To be a charge,"
Said he to them one day.

So from their sight,
One morning bright,
He wandered far away;
And coming back,
He lost the track,
And farther off did stray.

Then, wild with fear,
Now there, now here,
They ran, they called his name:
"Bob White! Bob White!"
With all their might;
But still no answer came.

Through copse and fens,
And lonely glens—

All through the fields of grain,
With anxious look,
In every nook
They searched, but all in vain.

Day after day,
In every way,
Seeking from morn till night—
In earnest strain,
Again, again,
They cried, "Bob White! Bob White!"

And by and by
That anxious cry
By all their tribe was heard;
And one and all
Began to call,
And seek the poor, lost bird.

Now stepping smart,
Now stopping short,
To listen for a sound;
Now on tiptoe,
Now stooping low,
They closely scanned the ground.

And far and near,
And loud and clear,
Rang out that earnest call:
"Bob White! Bob White!"
Poor Bob was quite
Beyond the reach of all.

Thus years went past,
And when at last
Death claimed those stricken birds,
Their family dear,

And friends drew near
To hear their parting words.

“O friends,” they said,
“When we are dead,
Search every foot of ground
From shore to shore;
And ne’er give o’er
Till your lost prince is found.”

Then side by side
That couple died;
And, though long years have gone,
In many lands,
By faithful bands,
The search goes bravely on.

Thus I have told
This story old;

Now listen what they say :

“From bush or rail

You’ll hear the quail,

On any summer-day.”



ANGELINE.



THOU art fairer than the moon,
Shining full at Night's high noon;
Winsome as a day in June,

Angeline!

Graceful as the bounding roe,
Charming as the brooks that flow—
Laughing sweetly, lispings low,

Angeline!


Thou art modest as a flower,
Blooming in a wild-wood bower;
Gentle as the twilight hour,

Angeline!

Sweeter than the sweetest rose,
That in any garden grows;
Chaste and pure, as driven snows,
 Angeline!

Where thou art, there would I be—
Yes, I love thee! love but thee!
Canst thou love me, only me,
 Angeline?
Take my heart and give me thine!
Come and sit beneath my vine!
Let our fortunes intertwine,
 Angeline!

KISSING THROUGH THE LEAVES.

OME to my little window,
Just for a change," she said;
"And say good-by." I promised,
And went with eager tread.

It was a cozy window
Under the cottage eaves,
Half hidden by the clusters
Of fragrant vines and leaves.

The sly, mischievous moonbeams
Were peeping here and there,
To get a glimpse, in passing,
Of her so true and fair.

And there we took our parting,
She in, and I outside;
While dewy leaves and blossoms
Her blushes tried to hide.

There, through the tangled net-work
Of leaf, and flower, and vine,
A something, sweet and tender,
Passed from her lips to mine.

I must not tell the secrets
That dropped beneath the eaves—
But, oh! it was delicious,
This kissing through the leaves!

SHE SLEEPS WELL.



TENDERLY, tenderly

Lay her to rest:

Folding the lily hands

On the still breast.

Kiss for the last time now,

Softly the marble brow,

Try to remember how

Greatly she's blest.

Tenderly, tenderly

Lay her to rest!

Peacefully, peacefully,

Sweetly asleep!

Pain can not wake her from

Slumber so deep.

Ended her sorrows are,
Gone her blest spirit, where
All things are pure and fair,
No more to weep.
Peacefully, peacefully,
Sweetly asleep!

Hopefully, hopefully,
Say, "All is well!"
What are her joys to-day,
Tongue can not tell.
Through God's endearing grace,
Sometime you'll see her face,
There in that happy place,
Where she doth dwell.
Hopefully, hopefully,
Say, "All is well!"

GRACIE AND GENARO.

GENARO. .



HERE, Gracie, let us sit beneath this tree:

It is a noble tree! How soft and fine

The grass is here beneath its kindly shade!

Nature is very good and generous

To make us such a fresh and fragrant seat.

GRACIE.

See! here are flowers, Gen-ar-o, oh how sweet!

There, you have crushed this violet's little heart!

Poor dear! I would not hurt it for the world!

Now I will make a chaplet for your brow;

And, cousin, you will tell me, will you not,

The little secret that you said no ear

Must hear but mine:—but mine? what can it be?

GENARO.

What can it be? Well, Gracie, you shall hear.
Sit here beside me; cull your flowers first,
And while you make your garland, I will tell—
But what if it should make you pout, my coz!
I never spoke of her to you.

GRACIE.

Of her?

GENARO.

Yes, of my love: the girl whom I adore!

GRACIE.

And if you do, why should I pout at that?

GENARO.

Because girls do not often love to hear
Another praised; and, Gracie, you're a girl.

GRACIE.

Oh, is that all! Then tell me of your love.
I will not frown at all, nor drop my lips,
But look as pleasant as a summer-morn—
Only do tell me all. And is she good?
And is she fair? and do you love her much?

GENARO.

Yes, Gracie, she is good, and fair, and oh!
I can not tell you how I love that girl!
She is the earthly center of my thoughts;
The sunlight of my days; the sweet starlight
Of all my nights; and she is so enwound
About my heart, 'twould break if she should die.
You look less happy, Gracie, than you did
A moment since—let's talk no more of this.

GRACIE.

Nay, cousin, you mistake! you know you said,
"If she should die!" Heaven grant she may not
die!

Now tell me how she looks; go on, good coz.

GENARO.

And shall I draw a picture of my love?
But how can I do this in words? as well
Attempt to paint a rainbow; yet I will
Try to suggest the image of my love.
Fancy a girl, then, Gracie, at that age
When girlhood blossoms into womanhood;
Like a sweet rose-bud bursting into bloom.
She is not yet a woman fully grown,
Nor yet a girl; but half-determined stands
Between the two: quite willing to advance,
Yet clinging to her girlish looks and ways.

About your size, slender, and finely formed.
Her hair—I can not paint a sunbeam, so
I'll merely say 'tis golden like your own;
And like yours too, it hangs in wavy curls
Around her shoulders like the warm sunshine
Upon the spotless snow. Her brow is smooth,
Not high, but beautifully formed.
Her eyes—such splendid eyes! I only wish
That you could see them, Gracie, looking up,
As I have often seen them, into mine;
So soft and dreamy, and so full of love.
Methinks your eyes are very much like hers.
What shall I call them, cousin?

GRACIE.

Are they blue?

GENARO.

Yes, blue and full of thought, as though the soul
Looked through them.

GRACIE.

Then call them windows painted blue,
At which the soul sits, looking through.
What color are my eyes, Genaro, gray?

GENARO.

No, they are blue like hers. Oh, her eyes are—
What shall I call them?—Yes! two little heavens,
Serene, and full of thoughtful, earnest light;
Where truth, and wit, and gladness, like a group
Of sister stars, sparkle and dwell, and whence
Intelligence beams like the full-orbed moon.
And very often through these cloudless skies
Are angels seen; that sometimes weep for us
When we are in distress or doing wrong—
This is the dew that falls from these “sweet heavens.”
And there are roses in her face that bloom
Throughout the year.

GRACIE.

You speak in riddles now ;
But let me put your riddles into rhyme :
Each blue eye a little heaven,
Where the light of love reposes ;
Each soft cheek a little garden,
Wherein blossom sweetest roses.
And is she good, Genaro ? Is she good ?

GENARO.

Yes, she is good ; for not long since she wept,
Almost, to see me crush a violet.
But come, sweet Cousin Gracie, you shall see
The likeness of my love ; I have it here,
And you may judge yourself if she is fair.
Look in this locket (showing her a locket with
Only a mirror in it), have I told the truth ?

GRACIE.

Oh, Genaro, fie! and is it me
That you have said such dreadful things about?
Nay, you are jesting now; I know you are,
For I am but a plain and simple girl.

GENARO.


Well, Gracie, if you are, so is my love;
For you are she. Yes, dearest, it is you
That I have dreamed about so long, and loved
Better than my own life. I've studied you
As I would study some delightful book:
Looking into your upturned eyes to see
If love was there. And long ago I found
All that I wished to know; that you loved me.
Now, darling, have I read your eyes aright?

GRACIE.

'Tis folly to deny in words, that which
My looks declare: so I'll confess the truth.
My eyes, it seems, have told you naughty tales.
I would have dropped the blinds if I had known
That you were looking in upon my thoughts:
But from this time my secrets are your own.



THE BACHELOR'S SOLILOQUY.

 O marry, or not to marry; that is the question.
Whether 'tis nobler in a man to suffer
The jeers and banTERS of outrageous females,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by proposing, end them. To court; to marry;
That's all: and by a marriage say we end
The heart-ache, and the thousand and one ills
Bachelors are heir to; 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wished. To court; to marry;
To marry, perchance to rue! aye, there's the rub!
For in that state what after-thoughts may come,
When we have shuffled off this bachelor coil,
Must bring repentance. There's the respect
That makes man live so long a single life:

For who would bear the scorn of pretty girls,
The hints of widows, the insolence of married men,
The inconveniences of undarned socks,
And threadbare coats, and shirts with buttons off;
The pangs of love-fits, and the owl-like life
That lonely bachelors are subject to—
When he, himself, might his quietus make
With a bare marriage license? Who would bear
To fret and groan under a single life,
But that the dread of something after marriage—
That undiscovered net-work from whose toils
No venturer escapes, puzzles the will,
And makes us rather bear the ills we have,
Than fly to others that we know not of?

SERENADE.



H, the air is so delicious,

And the sky above is clear;

And the mocking-bird is making love

To his mate so dear, so dear!

Oh, the stars are softly shining,

And the full-moon's mellow light

Over all the landscape lies so still,

And the lake is calm to-night.

CHORUS—Then come and try my boat, love!

'Tis waiting by the shore;

And proudly, lightly, swiftly,

'Twill skim the waters o'er.

Oh, come with me to-night, love!

And, sitting side by side,

So smoothly, gently, safely,

So merrily we'll glide.

THE KITTY DIDS.



WHEN summer skies become less bright,
And summer-days are not so long;
As twilight deepens into night,
The Kitty Dids begin their song.

And what is all the noise about,
In this unhappy family?
They can not tell themselves, no doubt,
Just why it is they disagree.

I wonder what has Kitty done;
Or whether it be false or true!
To her it may be only fun
To hear them make this great ado.

Some say she did; others deny,
And say she didn't. So it goes,
Till this confused and silly cry
Destroys their peace and their repose.

In shrub and tree, in ambush hid,
Far in the hush of night we hear
The "did" and "didn't," "Kitty did"
And "Kitty didn't" on the air.

They'd better mind their own affairs,
And each its own opinion keep;
They'd better say their evening prayers,
And in the bushes go to sleep.

And here a moral you may find:
Be not like this contentious crew;
Avoid disputes, and never mind
What other people say or do.

THE COMING STORM.



THE sun had passed its highest altitude,
And, as the day declined, a massive cloud
Rose like a crouching monster from the deep,
Stretched its unwieldy form and dusky limbs,
And reared its huge proportions in the sky.
Slowly and steadily it mounted up
The azure slope, frowning menacingly,
And gathering strength and sternness as it moved.
At intervals a muffled, rumbling sound
Told that the elements were busy there,
Mounting their batteries and marshaling
Their forces for the strife.

Midsummer's heat
Scorched with its fiery breath the fainting earth,

And palpitated through the lifeless air.
The stillness was intense: the restless breeze
Paused in its play; and every bird and beast
Panted for breath. Even the aspen-tree
Felt the oppressive, pulseless quietude,
And all its leaves were motionless and mute.

And now the sun, declining in his power,
Wearied by fruitless struggles with the clouds;
Dispirited, and shorn of all his locks,
Retired in sullen gloom behind the scene.
And then the spirit of the mighty storm
Awoke in wrath. His piercing eye flashed fire;
And dazzling chains, and sheets of lurid flame
Lit up the gloom, and for an instant changed
The solid wall of blackness in the sky
To murky billows and unshapely caves.
His voice found utterance in thunder-tones:

At first a mutter, deep and half-suppressed,
Rumbled within the bowels of the cloud;
Then breaking forth in fury uncontrolled,
Bellowed along the nebulous expanse;
And rattling up the steep acclivities,
Rolled down the rugged passes of the cloud
And far away into abyssmal caves,
With such explosive and tremendous shocks
As jarred the heavens and the solid earth.
The winds—a monster brood of giant strength—
Were all uncaged, and flapped their unseen wings
In wild abandonment of boisterous mirth.

A lull at length ensued; and then a pause
Held the gigantic forces of the storm
In mute control. But only for a time:
That breathless calm foreboded coming din;
And only served to heighten the effect,

And bring the tempest out in bold relief,
The elements, impatient of restraint,
Muttered in threatening tones their discontent.
Then far and near a sound of tumult told
The swift approach of the impending storm.
To right, and left, and rushing in hot haste,
Like scudding sails by wanton winds pursued,
The flying squadrons led the mighty van.

In massive columns and unbroken lines,
In stern comportment and majestic pomp,
With flashing colors and the roll of drums
The terrible battalions of the storm
Moved to the front—a spectacle of awe.
And, then, obedient to a higher power,
With roar and clash of wings the winds caught up
The ponderous cloud, and bore it swiftly on
In awful grandeur through the trembling air.

A thousand hearts were paralyzed with fear.
The timid shuddered, and the brave stood still,
Awaiting in suspense the coming storm. .
Then, while the rushing, terrifying winds
Deluged the heavens with a flood of sound;
And while the tramp of the advancing hosts,
And rumbling roar of thunder chariots
Resounded through the corridors of space,
Departing day put out its fading lights,
And left us to the darkness and the storm.

WITHOUT OUR HOPES.



WITHOUT our hopes of future bliss,

Without Religion's anchor sure,

Oh, what a dreary world were this!

Who could the storms of life endure?

Deprived of these, our souls would grope

In darkness growing darker still.

Bereft of heavenly peace and hope,

How could we bear so great an ill?

Take these away, and what are we?

A thing of sport for every gale—

A wandering ship upon the sea,

Without a rudder or a sail!

Let sun and moon be blotted out,
Let every star refuse to shine—
Better lose these than be without
The purer light of grace divine!



“BE NOT AFRAID: ONLY BELIEVE.”



CHRISTIAN, though God hide his face,
And for a time withdraw his grace;
Though scarce a glimpse of heaven is seen,
Because of clouds that intervene—
His promise is forever sure,
And to all ages will endure!
Let not your spirit mourn or grieve—
“Be not afraid: only believe!”

Though rough the path in which you tread,
And dark the way where you are led—
Left friendless, and without a home,
Over the desert waste to roam—
God will not thus leave those to die,
Who on his promises rely!

Take courage! help you will receive—
"Be not afraid: only believe!"

Faint-hearted Christians, though the day
Of better things seems far away;
Though sin is rife throughout the land,
And wicked men, with daring hand,
The Temple of our hopes assail—
God's kingdom must and will prevail!
Let not the world your hearts deceive—
"Be not afraid: only believe!"

NIGHT.



THE sun is set; but in the western sky
Are lingering flashes of his closing eye.

Night comes apace—her shadow goes before,
And soon another day will be no more.

The flocks and herds o'er pastures cease to roam,
And seek instinctively their master's home.

The way-worn traveler finds some favored spot,
Where till the morrow he may cast his lot.

Homeward the farmer from his plow returns,
Viewing the hopeful crop he dearly earns;

Glad that his labors for the day are o'er,
He sits in quiet in his cottage door.

Now all the little birds have gone to rest,
Perched upon limbs, or in their cozy nests.

The hills grow dim—a deeper, darker shade
Gathers upon the forest and the glade,
And everywhere the winds are hushed in sleep.
No sound is heard to break the silence deep,
Save now and then the owl's unearthly hoot,
Whose doleful echoes wake the valleys mute;
Or now, perchance, the lonely whip-poor-will
Startles the quietude of vale and hill.

Now Night is here—a huge, black, silent bird,
Slowly descending, softly, all unheard;
Settles on earth, and o'er it darkness brings,
And gathers all the world beneath its wings.

LONGING FOR REST.



THE ceaseless toil!
The wild turmoil!
The endless reaching after spoil!
The tiresome strife,
Forever rife—
Oh what is so monotonous as life?

No rest, no rest!
No tranquil breast
This side the mansions of the blest!
Still, day by day,
Without relay,
The wearied body struggles on its way.

The tired heart sighs,
The spirit cries,
And longs for rest. Oh, could these eyes
Forever close
On mortal woes,
And open on the scenes of blest repose!

Oh, troubled heart,
Where'er thou art,
Let not thy hopes of rest depart!
Courage maintain!
Steadfast remain!
Thy patient waiting will not be in vain.

For there is rest—
A sweet behest
Our Father gives when he thinks best.

The body here,
The spirit there,
Will be released from every toil and care.

Be patient still,
O soul, until
Thy years their round of duties fill!
Then peace complete,
And rest so sweet,
Will crown and bless thee at the Savior's feet.

GOING HOME.



FAREWELL, friends! Death soon will sever

Ties that bind me close to you ;

Farewell now, but not forever—

Only for a time, adieu!

Once again I hope to meet you,

There where parting comes no more—

Hope to meet and gladly greet you,

On that peaceful, sunny shore.

Tenderly a Voice doth call me:

“Come and join the heavenly band!”

Jordan's waves do not appall me,

For the Savior holds my hand.

Do not weep for me, or sorrow!

Gently through the billows' foam!

He will lead me—ere to-morrow

I will safely reach my home.

Hark! faint strains of wondrous sweetness

From beyond the river come!

Oh, the fullness, the completeness,

Of the joy of going home!

SLEEP.



GUILT will not let his wretched victim be;
But startles him with dreams. The memory
Of evil deeds, are nettles in the bed
That pierce with poisoned stings the sleeper's head.
Grief is a restless bed-fellow; and fear
Whispers its ghostly stories to the ear;
While anxious thoughts upon the troubled breast,
Are heavy weights, destroying peace and rest.
Sleep will not lodge with care, or sorrow know,
And has but little fellowship with woe;
Treats every wretched being with disdain,
And flies affrighted from the couch of pain.
Sleep shows no favors; but as freely brings
Its healing balm to peasants as to kings:
Yea, oftener prefers an humble bed,
To that where lies a haughty monarch's head.

To sleep serenely, by no dreams annoyed,
The mind must be at rest; the "conscience void
Of all offense." Our thoughts, that love to roam
So far and wide, must all be summoned home.
Cares, with our garments, must be laid away—
We'll find them waiting at the break of day,
Ready and willing to resume their sway.

There is another sleep, beyond recall—
A long and dreamless sleep that comes to all.
Yes, in a darkened room, and narrow bed,
Where we can never hear the voice or tread
Of fellow-beings; where no rattling drums,
Or thunders, can disturb till morning comes.
And when that long, deep sleep at last is o'er,
If we would feel the need of rest no more,
The soul must be prepared to meet its God
Before the body sleeps beneath the sod.

SLEIGHING.



IN a still winter-night,
When the young heart is light,
And the moon is full, and the stars are bright;
To the fair and the gay,
In a smooth-gliding sleigh,
'Tis nice to career o'er the hills and away.

As they glide o'er the ground,
How cheery the sound
Of the song and the jest and the laugh that goes
round:

While the tinkle of bells,
In rhythmical swells,
A story of unrestrained merriment tells.

SPEAK GENTLY.



SPEAK gently, kindly; let no tone
Or word of angry strife,
Poison the atmosphere of home,
Or sadden this brief life.

For words of kindness win the heart
To all that's good and true;
And to its tender plants impart
Refreshment as the dew.*

Since gentle words are easy said,
And leave no pain behind—
No bitter fruits when we are dead—
'Tis better to be kind.

Yes, better to be kind to all,
 Whatever they have done:
A gentle word or act, though small,
 May save an erring one.



I SHALL BE SATISFIED.

"I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness."

—PSALM XVII. 15.



SHALL be satisfied,

When safe across the tide;

When mortal forms immortal take,

And endless day begins to break,

If with his likeness I awake—

I shall be satisfied!

I shall be satisfied,

Forever by his side!

In Canaan's goodly land so fair,

If I behold my Savior there,

And his transcendent image bear—

I shall be satisfied!

I shall be satisfied!

What could I want beside?

The victory won; the conflict o'er;

Transported to that peaceful shore,

To be like him forevermore—

I shall be satisfied.



A PRAYER.



SAVIOUR, draw me nearer, nearer!

Bind my heart and soul to thee!

May thy wondrous love grow dearer,

Dearer may thy presence be!

Safely, safely through the valley,

Guide my wandering steps each day:

Let me never stop to dally

With temptations by the way.

In the time of want and sorrow—

Though the night be dark and long—

May I trust thee for the morrow,

With its sunshine and its song.

May the load of sin grow lighter!
Take away my doubts and fears:
That the star of hope may brighter
Shine through all the coming years.

Then, when mortal scenes are ended—
Having acted well my part—
Let my life with thine be blended!
Oh receive me where thou art!

* * * * *

In thy habitation fair,
Savior, hear my earnest prayer!

NOTES.

NOTE I., PAGE 47.

THESE lines are a tribute to the memory of the author's mother—a consistent Christian, of whom it may be said:

“None knew her but to love her,
None named her but to praise her.”

NOTE II., PAGE 94.

This and the following piece were suggested by the decease of an aged Christian couple. The interval between their deaths was but a few days.

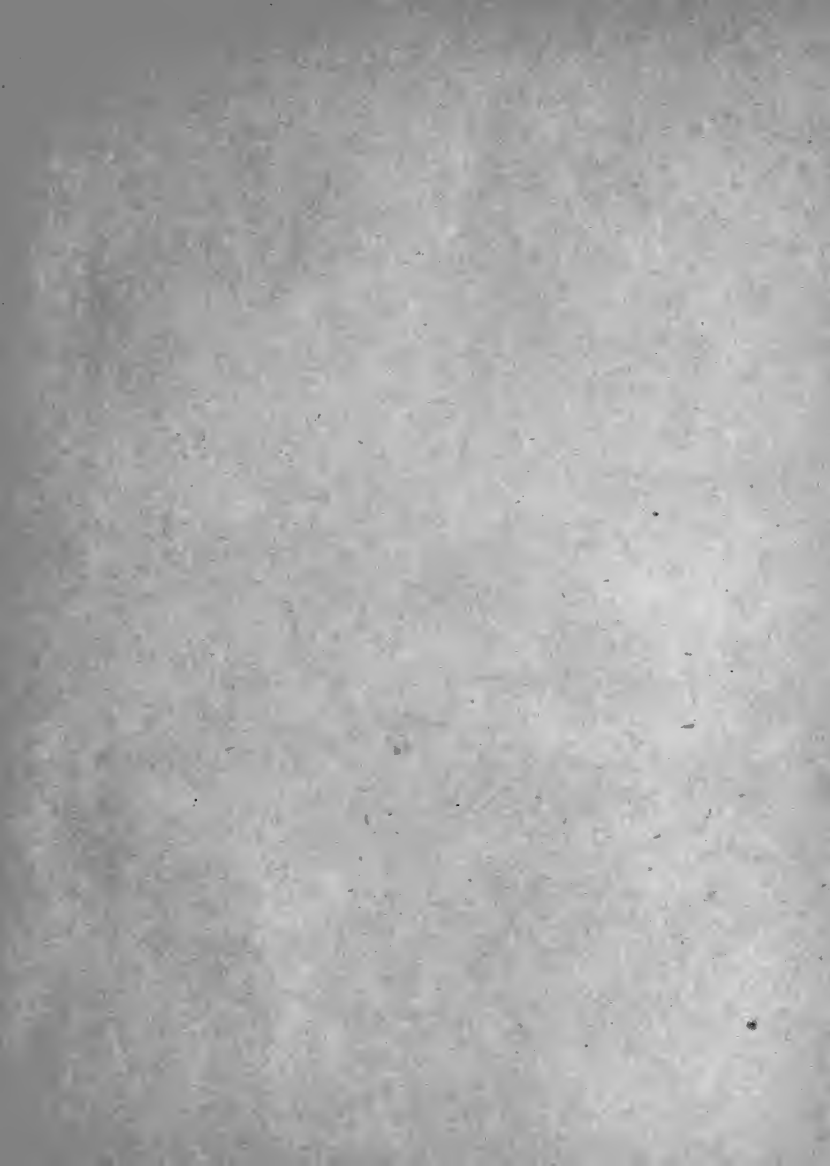
NOTE III., PAGE 127.

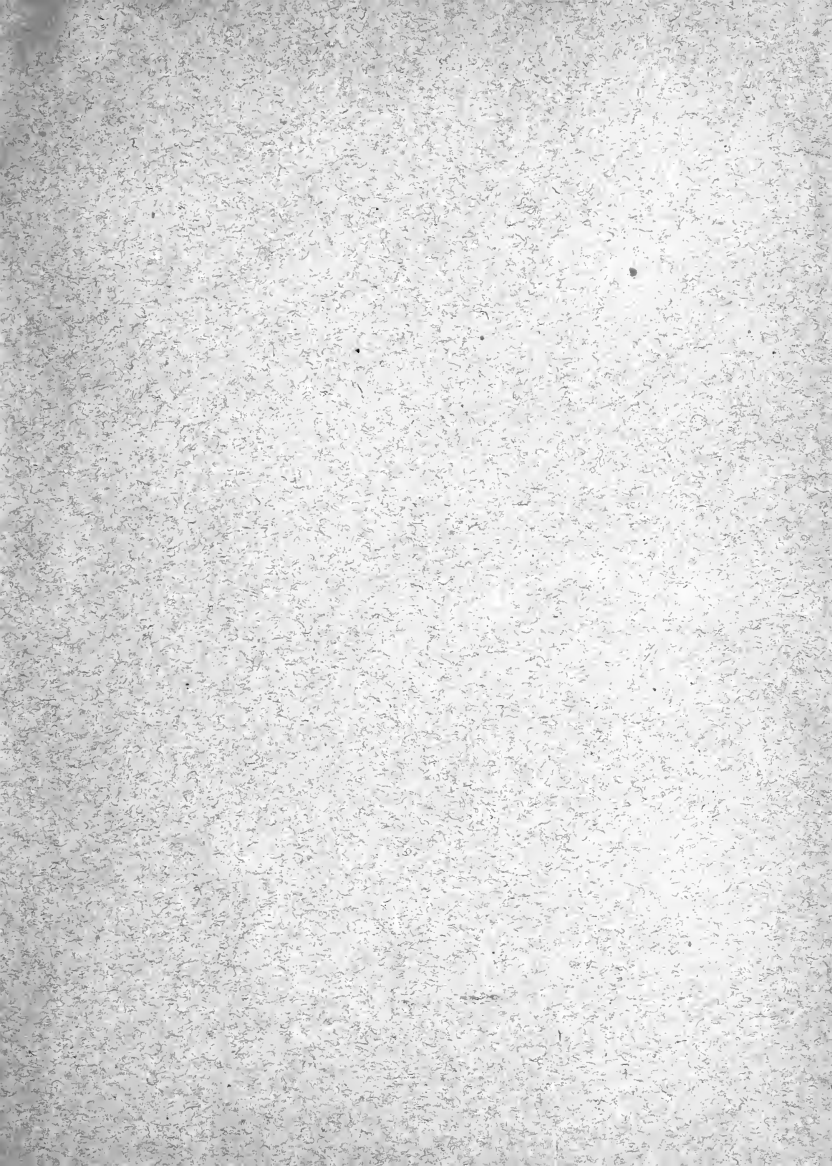
This parody was published anonymously, many years ago, and afterward found its way into Kidd's Elocution.

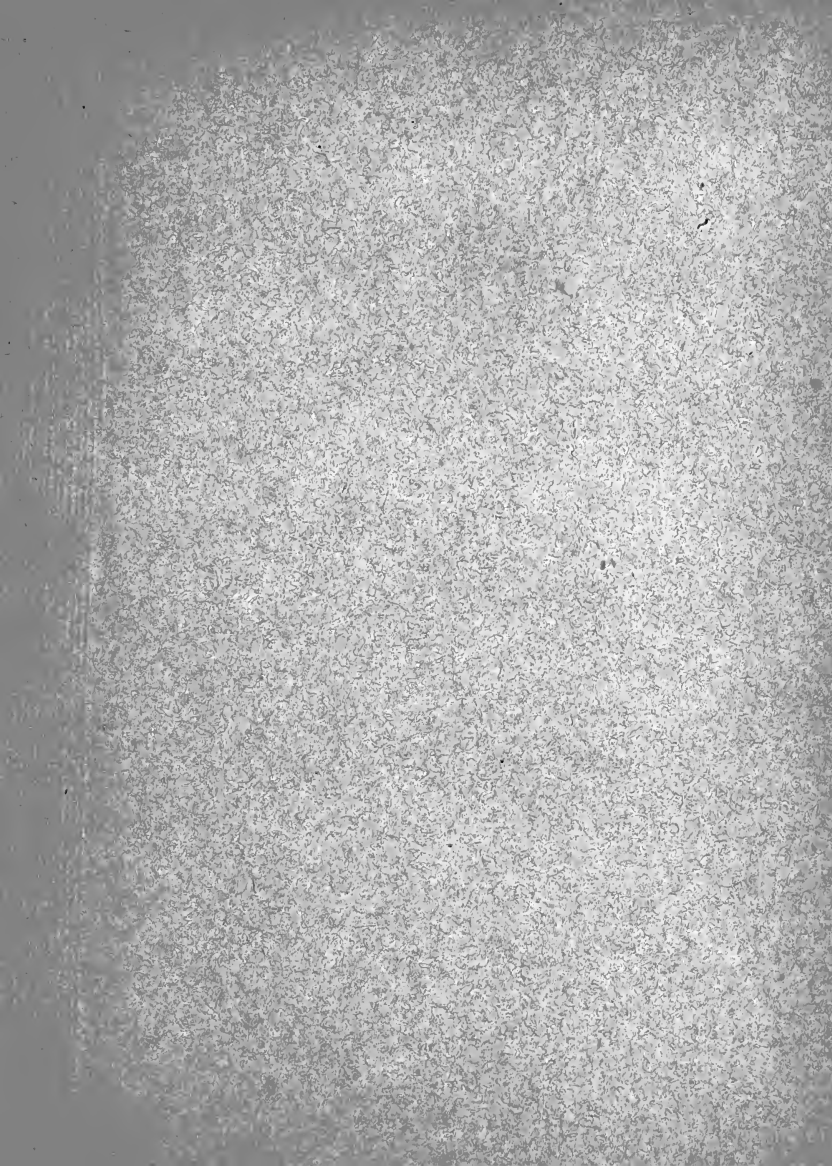












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